X. SIGNIFICANT IRREVERSIBLE ENVIRONMENTAL CHANGES

An EIR must identify any significant irreversible environmental changes that would be caused by the proposed project being analyzed. Irreversible environmental changes may include current or future commitments to the use of non-renewable resources, or secondary or growth-inducing impacts that commit future generations to similar uses. In addition, irreversible damage can result from environmental accidents associated with the project. Irretrievable commitments of resources should be evaluated to assure that such current consumption is justified.[1] The *CEQA Guidelines* describe three categories of significant irreversible changes that should be considered, as further detailed below.

A. CHANGES IN LAND USE WHICH WOULD COMMIT FUTURE GENERATIONS

As described throughout this EIR, this long-range strategy program for redevelopment focuses on revitalizing the traditional Downtown center by allowing higher density infill development and replacement of underutilized uses, and expanding the designated Downtown Core Area and land use intensities to the west and north into areas with significant unbuilt and underutilized parcels of land. Growth under *Strategy 2000* would occur as infill redevelopment of similar types, though at occasionally higher densities than at present. Such growth and revitalization would not commit future generations to changes in land use which would be substantial.

B. IRREVERSIBLE CHANGES FROM ENVIRONMENTAL ACTIONS

Irreversible changes to the physical environment could occur from accidental release of hazardous materials associated with development. However, compliance with hazardous materials regulations and policies, and the remediation of existing conditions within the project site, as outlined in Chapter V.J, Hazards, are expected to reduce this potential impact to a less-than-significant level.

Other than the accidental release of hazardous materials, the activities occurring in the study area under *Strategy 2000* would be similar to those urban activities occurring in any large metropolitan area.

C. CONSUMPTION OF NONRENEWABLE RESOURCES

Consumption of nonrenewable resources includes increased energy consumption, conversion of agricultural lands to urban uses, and lost access to mineral reserves. The project would redevelop underutilized parcels in Downtown San Jose. No agricultural lands would be converted and no access to mining reserves would be lost with implementation of *Strategy 2000*. While implementation of

[1] *CEQA Guidelines*, 2003, Section 15126.2(c)

Strategy 2000 would require additional energy of several types for construction and for on-going use, it would not require the construction of major new lines to deliver energy. Furthermore, to the extent that growth throughout San Jose is partly an expression of regional demand, redevelopment within the Greater Downtown would represent a more efficient allocation of non-renewable resources than many other types or patterns of growth.